

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CEA-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CIEP-02 STR-08 TRSE-00

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TAGS: ETRD, BE

SUBJECT: BELGIAN REACTION TO PROPOSED TRADE BILL (CONTINUED)

REF: BRUSSELS 2028

1. PASSAGE OF ONE WEEK SINCE INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSED TRADE BILL HAS PROVIDED TIME FOR EDITORIAL AND PERSONAL REACTIONS ALTHOUGH GOB ITSELF HAS REFRAINED FROM OFFICIAL COMMENT. COMMENTARY CONTINUES TO BE RELATIVELY LIMITED, ALTHOUGH TONE OF BOTH PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS AND EDITORIAL WRITING CLEARLY INDICATES WIDESPREAD BELGIAN AWARENESS OF IMPORTANCE OF PROPOSAL. MUCH OF COMMENT WHICH HAS APPEARED IS IN CONTEXT OF OVERALL US- EUROPEAN RELATIONS, POINTING UP IMPLICATIONS OF TRADE RELATIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS FOR COMMON DEFENSE AND POLITICAL ARRANGEMENTS.

2. THERE HAS BEEN SOME CRITICISM, MOSTLY IN RESPECT TO ALLEGED PROTECTIONIST PRESSURES IN US AND CRUCIAL EFFECT THEY MIGHT HAVE ON USG NEGOTIATION POSITION. ONE THEME WHICH APPEARS IS CONCERN FOR ACTUAL AS OPPOSED TO STATED OBJECTIVES OF USG PROPOSALS. HOWEVER, MAJOR THRUST IS RECOGNITION (SOMETIMES GRUDGING) OF TRADE EXPANSIONIST THEME IN PRESIDENT' S TRADE PROPOSALS. WE FEEL THAT LACK OF DETAILED CRITICISM IN EITHER PUBLISHED COMMENTARY OF IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS REFLECTS ESSENTIAL AGREEMENT WITH

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TRADE BILL APPROACH WHILE LACK OF ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL MEERLY REFLECTS BELGIAN ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR POSITION ON OTHER SIDE OF TABLE IN UPCOMING NEGOTIATIONS.

3. SAMPLE PRESS COMMENT INCLUDES: GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN CALLED TRADE PROPOSAL " PRESIDENT NIXON' S TRADE BILL BLUEPRINT FOR NEW WORLD ORDER" AND WENT ON TO CRITICIZE BILL AS AN " ULTIMATUM" INTENDED TO REMIND WORLD OF POLITICAL ROLE OF US BY OUTLINING " CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH US CAN CONTINUE TO BEAR ITS RESPONSIBILITIES". ON SAME DAY (APRIL 19) BRUSSELS DAILY LIBRE BELGIQUE SAID " PRESIDENT NIXON WANTS TO DISCUSS WITH EUROPEAN LEADERS THE REDEFINITION OF THE RULES OF THE ATLANTIC GAME BUT HE MUST FIRST DEAL WITH THE ISOLATIONIST TENDENCIES IN CONGRESS". LIBRE ARTICLE DISCUSSES THE TRADE NEGOTIATIONS IN CONTEXT OF OVERALL US- EUROPEAN RELATIONS AND CALLS FOR EUROPEAN UNDERSTANDING IF PRESIDENT IS TO OVERCOME ISOLATIONIST TENDENCIES. LIBRE ALSO THREW IN OBSERVATION THAT PRESIDENT NIXON' S VISIT TO PRINCIPAL EUROPEAN CAPITALS SHOULD INCLUDE BRUSSELS WHICH IS " ONLY PLACE WHERE THE SMALL COUNTRIES, UNITED IN THE HEART OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY, CAN EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS".

4. ON APRIL 20, FLEMISH LANGUAGE STANDAARD CONTINUED SERIES OF ARTICLES ON US WITH ARTICLE WHICH LISTED US TRADE COMPLAINTS AGAINST EC. AUTHOR SAYS " AMERICAN EXPECT FROM EC A RETURN TO ORTHODOXY OF GATT RULES". GAZET VAN ANTWERPEN WROTE " WHILE IT CANNOT BE DENIED THAT THERE ARE PRESENT DIFFICULTIES BETWEEN US AND EUROPE, ESPECIALLY IN TRADE FIELD BUT ALSO IN THAT OF MILITARY COOPERATION, IT CANNOT BE DENIED EITHER THAT FACTS ARE FREQUENTLY TORN FROM THEIR CONTEXT AND EXAGGERATED" BY " TRADITIONAL OPPONENTS OF ATLANTIC UNITY". " NIXON IS CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTING TO SUPPRESS ISOLATIONISM IN HIS OWN COUNTRY, TO BRIDGE THE GAPS AND TO FIND A COMPROMISE PERSPECTIVE."

5. BRUSSELS SOCIALIST DAILY LE PEUPLE WHICH INCREASINGLY GIVES IMPRESSION OF BEING GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN, HAS REMAINED VERY QUIET ON WHOLE SUBJECT. GENERAL IMPRESSION OF LOCAL REACTION WELL SUMMED UP IN LONG ARTICLE IN BRUSSELS DAILY LE SOIR BY PROMINENT BUSINESSMEN AND PUBLIC FIGURE, LOUIS AMEYE (WHO HAD BEEN EXTENSIVELY BRIEFED BY EMBASSY) AMEYE CONCLUDES ARTICLE BY SAYING " IN SUM, IN THE NEGOTIATIONS WHICH WILL SOON OPEN, THE DIFFERENCES WILL BE UNCLASSIFIED

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CERTAINLY NUMEROUS, THE ARGUMENTS FORCEFUL, AND THE ISSUE
UNCERTAIN. BUT ON THIS EVEN OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE IMPORTANT
THING TO NOTE IS THAT EACH PARTICIPANT IS PREPARING, DESPITE
THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE TASK AHEAD, TO CONSTRUCTIVELY EXPAND
THE PROSPECTS OF GREATER INTERNATIONAL TRADE".
STRAUSZ- HUPE

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